What's Going On Inside Your Head?

MOLLY POTTER

ILLUSTRATED BY
SARAH JENNINGS

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Dedicated to Helen Oliver who is very good at looking after everyone's heads.

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What's Going On Inside Your Head?

Our minds are where we do all our thinking. Thinking includes making decisions about what to do, deciding what to believe in and coming up with new ideas. What we think very much affects how we feel about ourselves and how well we cope with things that happen to us. Our minds and the thinking they do are therefore really important, so we need to look after them and keep them as healthy as possible.

We can't just flick a switch and make our minds healthy – we have to keep working at it. Keeping a healthy mind is about becoming aware of our thoughts and how they affect us. We need to practise healthy thinking habits and find ways of coping when upsetting things happen. This book gives you lots of ideas about how to keep your mind healthy.

It's important to know...

Our brain is the organ inside our head that controls everything that happens in our body, such as making our mouth move to speak and keeping our heart pumping. A brain is a solid organ and looks a bit like a sponge. Our mind is made up of things like thoughts, imagination and beliefs. It is not a solid object and cannot be touched.

Contents

How should I think about myself? 6

How does looking after my body help my mind? 8

What is happiness? 10

What do I do with emotions? 12

When something upsetting happens, what will help me? 14

What can I do when thoughts bother me? 16

What can I do when someone upsets me? 18

What is meditation? 20

How do I ask for help when I need it? 22

How do friends and family help keep my mind healthy? 24

How can I be a better friend? 26

How can I improve my thinking habits? 28

How should I think about myself?

Feeling good about ourselves and having positive thoughts are not always easy things to do. Sometimes we think too much about what we're not good at or we compare ourselves to others and decide we're rubbish! This is never a helpful thing to do.

Everyone is different and we all have things we're good at and things we're not so good at. We feel better about ourselves if we celebrate successes but also accept that we can't be brilliant at everything (nobody can) and this is absolutely fine.

Accepting yourself as you are, knowing what you're good at and what you're not so good at is a way of being kind to yourself. When you make a mistake, it's important that you forgive yourself (and hopefully learn from it so you don't make the same mistake again!). Forgiving yourself helps you keep a healthy mind.

Top tip

Just because you aren't naturally brilliant at something, doesn't mean you should stop trying to get better at it. If you really want to, you can get better at anything with lots of practice. It takes bravery to stick at something you don't find easy.

How does looking after my body help my mind?

Our body carries our brain around, protects it and makes sure it has what it needs to work properly. If our body is working well, our brain is more likely to be working well too. If we do the things that we know keep our body fit and healthy, then our brain and mind are more likely to be healthy.

It's good to know...

Sometimes when we feel a bit sad or low, exercise can make us feel so much better, especially if it's outdoors in a park, a wood or in the countryside where there are trees and grass.

For a healthy body and mind, we need to make sure we...

Have enough sleep.

Drink plenty of water.

Eat lots of fresh food.

Spend some time outside.

Do some exercise
(at least half an hour a day).

Take time to relax.